

### MOB MURDER TRIAL

# Ex-agent 'decimated' mob

■ A Boston federal judge testified that a former FBI agent on trial for a Miami murder had an uncanny knack for gaining the trust of mafia members.

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An informant gives his FBI agent handler \$10,000? Bad idea, Edward Harrington agreed.

How about a case of wine?

"In order to forge that relationship, you've got to recall, an informant is putting his life on the line," Harrington, a federal judge and former U.S. attorney in Boston, testified in a Miami courtroom Tuesday.

"Therefore, the agent has to cultivate an informant's good will. Therefore, a case of wine might pass muster — I'm not sure."

Harrington took the stand in defense of ex-FBI agent John Connolly, 68, who is accused of helping Boston gangsters orchestrate a 1982 murder in South Florida.

Prosecutors say Connolly, a former star agent in Boston, was corrupted by his informants: gangsters Stephen Flemmi and James "Whitey" Bulger. Investigators say Connolly shielded the gangsters from investigations, vacationed with them and even delivered a case of their wine to his FBI supervisor — who testified that he, too, was in cahoots with the gang.

### JAI-ALAI BOSS KILLED

Prosecutors insist Connolly tipped off Bulger and Flemmi that John Callahan — a former executive with World Jai-Alai in Miami — might cooperate with the feds regarding an earlier homicide.

Callahan was shot dead by the gang's hit man, his corpse found stuffed in a car trunk at Miami's airport.

Connolly is charged with murder and conspiracy to commit murder. Tuesday marked the first day of the



PHOTOS BY J. PAT CARTER/AP

**EXTRAVAGANT GIFTS:** Edward Harrington, top, testifies that Connolly, bottom center, had to accept wine and cash to 'cultivate [mob informants'] good will.'



defense's case. Testimony began Sept. 15.

Connolly was convicted in 2002 on federal racketeering charges for his involvement with the gang. Flemmi is serving life in prison. Bulger remains one of the FBI's most wanted fugitives.

### 'A GREAT ABILITY'

Connolly's skill in developing informants led to "the virtual decimation" of the New England mafia in the '80s, Harrington testified during questioning by defense attorney James McDonald.

"It was without parallel. John Connolly had a great ability, had a certain flair that attracted confidence and trust with underworld figures," Harrington said.

Harrington also downplayed Bulger's importance.

"He was a vicious gangster but his influence was not as magnified as it has been in recent years. . . . He was local hoodlum who controlled South Boston, but was not on

the same rank as the Mafia organization," he testified.

Harrington served as Massachusetts' U.S. attorney between 1977 and 1981. He has testified in Connolly's defense before — and penned a letter, on official letterhead, asking for leniency before the 2002 sentencing. He later withdrew the letter, acknowledging it was improper.

On Tuesday, Miami-Dade Assistant State Attorney Michael Von Zamft grilled Harrington about the lengths an agent should go to protect his informant.

Should an agent protect an informant from another law enforcement agency's investigation, Von Zamft asked?

Harrington paused. He tapped his fingers nervously.

"He should not, but he would be tempted to do so," Harrington replied. "He would be fearful his source of criminal intelligence would dry up if his informant would be prosecuted by another agency."